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CIA Study Finds Lags

Chinese Building Missiles, But Depend on '50s Arms

Associated Press

China is building its own strategic rocket and intercontinental missile force, but mainly depends on Soviet-designed weaponry of 1950s vintage for defense, says a Central Intelligence Agency study released by a congressional committee yesterday.

The Soviet Union lags behind the United States in most types of weapons technology, including aircraft, missiles, computers and electronics, and the Chinese are about 20 years behind the Russians, according to the report.

The findings were presented to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress in closed session last June. Partial testimony by CIA Director Stansfield Turner and other witnesses was released by the panel.

According to a portion of the study released last week, the Soviet Union faces a period of sharply reduced economic growth, the result of a shrinking labor force and a potentially serious oil shortage in the next few years.

The details made public yesterday disclosed that China, as well, is undergoing serious economic problems. It said China's gross national product did not grow at all during 1976, largely because of devastating earthquakes and political upheaval following the death of Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

China's new regime headed by Chairman Hua Kuo-feng is giving high priority to economic needs, especially agriculture and efforts to modernize industrial technology, the report said.

This will require heavy investment, increased imports, management reforms and worker incentives to improve efficiency.

"The new leaders are aware that this means modifying some of the Cultural Revolution's reforms, which were hostile to rapid economic progress, and they will give greater stress to higher academic standards and scientific and technological competence," Dr. Sayre Stevens, CIA deputy director, told the panel.

He said this may mean a period of belt-tightening by the Chinese instead of any new major outlays for military purposes next year.

Turner said the Chinese were developing a strategic rocket force and intercontinental missiles on their own, and also apparently have built a nuclear submarine.

But most of their weaponry consists of modified versions of Soviet-designed equipment of the 1950s, the CIA study said. The Chinese even have the Mig 21, a late-1950s aircraft, in limited production, the report said.

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